

OLD TIMES

Dear Mr. Price:

On January 5, 1886, my father, C. G. Sutton moved from his father's farm near Greenbank to what is now Mill Creek, then it was called Dog town. We left grandfather's farm early in the morning with our household goods loaded on two covered wagons. One wagon was driven by my uncle Samuel Sutton and the other by Asbury Sheets. Mother and I rode in Uncle Sam's wagon while father walked and drove two cows. The first day we got as far as Travelers Repose, and there we spent the night with Mr Peter D. Yeager and his good wife.

In those days the East Fork of the Greenbrier was not bridged so it was necessary to ford the stream. Ice had frozen several feet from each bank of the stream, leaving a deep channel in the middle. It was necessary for the men assisted by Mr Yeager and his son Will, to cut a channel through the shore ice so the wagons could get over. Then came Back River, or—as it is now known, The West Fork of the Greenbrier, and it was much worse than the East Fork. Luck was with us, however, since R. B. Kerr and Harvey Cromer were there at a mill owned and operated by Mr Kerr. To cross this Fork the wagons were forced to drop from two to three feet from the edge of the ice to the river bed. What a wonder they didn't upset. We managed however to negotiate the ford and start up Cheat Mountain. After traveling all day we reached Cheat Bridge and spent the night in the home of Mr Cromer. (Right here I want to say that no one ever had a better friend than Mr. Cromer.)

Mother had walked and driven the cows for quite some distance and had frozen her feet. The next morning it was bitter cold as only it can be on Cheat Mountain. Mr Cromer sent mother and me on to the last top by sleigh to where a Mr Lindsay lived. Mother and Mrs Lindsay prepared a hot dinner for the men who were driving. The wagons went on to the farm that night, making the trip in three days. Father left mother and me at his cousins, Renick Ward, and took us down to the farm the next day. The Ward farm where we spent the night is now part of the prison farm.

In August 1899 we returned to Durbin, using the same mode of traveling—covered wagons.

Neither the C. & O. or W. M., the Coal and Iron, as it was then known, had reached here yet. The preliminary surveys had been run for both roads were; anxious to open up the vast timber sections.

With the coming of the construction crews the roaring days began Durbin in those days was rough and ready, but what place located in sight of lumber operations such as O'Connell's Camp and two rival construction camps could say it wasn't.

I remember O'Connell's last drive

of logs to the Ronceverte Boom. Well known men of Pocahontas county were in the crew. Names such as these are familiar to the older generation. Bland Nottingham, John W Carpenter, Sherman Sutton, Wise Gillispie, Harper Smith, Lewis Lynch and J. A. (Jimmie) Kirkpatrick. Mr Kirkpatrick was the cook and his cookee was Roland Scott.

When the construction crew on the Coal and Iron reached what is now Bocker, my father carried the mail to the camp. On days that he could not go I carried the mail on horseback. A box was located in what is now the Lee Galford farm for one of the camps, and from there down to the river and back to Durbin following the railroad grade. N. B. Arbogast, or Uncle Polie, as he was affectionately known, was post master and I was his assistant.

Days when O'Connell and the construction camps pail off were liable to be rough and I have changed the mail while John Bell or Gratz Slavins stood guard with a Winchester.

When the C & I reached what is now West Durbin and the C & O what is now Durbin, both had their survey through what is called the Narrows just above Durbin. Both roads were anxious to lay steel through the gap and the C & O got the jump on the C & I. They rushed a crew in one Saturday night in October 1902. Sunday saw intense activity and when evening came a flat car loaded with ties stood at the end of steel. That is where the switch is located going into Pocahontas Tanning Company siding.

I have seen Durbin grow from this start to, where it is today. Located on U. S 250, the old, Staunton and and Parkersburg Turnpike and the junction of the W M and C & O. Rail Roads. Grown from two houses a post office and one small country store to an almost model town. To day we have paved streets, a water system second to none in the state, modern electric lights and power from the West Penn, a consolidated Methodist Church, movies in a modern theatre, and a graded school second to none in the county and closely crowding any in the state. No, Durbin hasn't done so badly by herself.

Give credit for our school to those men who in the past years have fought so hard for a high standard of learning. Mr Flynn, Mr Batson, Mr Hedrick, Mr McMillion and Mr Poscover. These men, assisted by as fine a group of teachers as anywhere in the State have made our school a top ranking one.

I really started out to describe the difference in transportation between Greenbank and Mill Creek fifty years ago and today but got sidetracked and rambled around until I have given a condensed history of Durbin.

To show the difference in modes of transportation I would suggest a trip in a 1940 model car over State Route 24 and U. S. 250.

Mrs. P. F. Eades.

Durbin, W. Va.

Pocahontas
Chap 4

Pocahontas
Times
1/15/40

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